



## HE TELLS HIS OWN STORY

It was a cry of the little boy, who stood at the corner of the stage, gazing at the audience. Then came a flurry of questions — on the credibility of relations, love, profundity, life, death and the feeling of nothingness. The play was *About Nothing*. "It is all about observations. The idea was to enable an individual to observe life from a distance. I could have layered the play with a number of characters but that would have taken away the essence of individuality. I designed it as a conversation — of a person with himself," explained the monologue director Ashley Lobo. Barry John played the protagonist and the dances were performed by the Danceworx Repertory.

The first issue was the quest for relationships. The narrator began with the story of his childhood friend Salmaan. Both resided in the small town of Bareilly with their

parents. "The source of entertainment for us in those two-roomed railway quarters were the pitched battles between drunken husbands and hysterical wives," said the narrator. Salmaan had an Indian mother and a *phirang* father, was abused by his friends and called *angrez ki aulad*. The entanglements of the child's mind were depicted with a twirling red

ribbon.

Respect and profundity were other issues raised.

"How does one attain respect? Is it earned, learned, forced, bought or gifted?" questioned the narrator. Salmaan decided on a soulmate to fulfil the void in his life.

This was followed by the fear of losing his love. Salmaan did lose his wife.

It was in the end that the audience got to know the narrator was Salmaan himself and the entire play was a dialogue between individual and self. When asked if he would like to be reborn,

he replied, "I would like to lead the life as a child, with no complexities of the adult world."

— Neha Sharma

